

A SMASHING 60TH

Winston-Salem Urban League celebrates landmark anniversary

BY LAYLA FARMER
THE CHRONICLE

"Celebrating the past and shaping the future."

That's the theme of the Winston-Salem Urban League's upcoming celebration in honor of its 60th anniversary.

"It's a very significant (anniversary) because of the history of the Urban League - the longevity, the quality of services we've provided," declared Public Relations Director Patricia Sadler. "The legacy of the (Winston-Salem) Urban League is just tremendous."

The week of Nov. 17-22 has been dedicated to anniversary activities for the social service and civil rights organization, which was founded as the Community Relations Project in Winston-Salem in 1948.

"We want to celebrate but we also want to forge ahead for the future," Sadler said. "The nature of our work and the mission that we do is more important today than ever."

The celebratory week begins at 6 p.m. Nov. 17, with a special Urban League Open House.

A Community Awards Celebration will be held Nov. 18 at the Millennium Center downtown. Designated volunteers, community leaders, faith-based organizations, small businesses nonprofit organizers and educators will all receive kudos for their contributions to the Urban League as part of the ceremony.

A citywide youth celebration will be held Nov. 19 in conjunction with Union Baptist Church.

The celebration will highlight the talents of youth in various groups, from the music and the arts to education. The celebration will be held at 6 p.m. at Union Baptist.

Thursday, Nov. 20 is dedicated to local seniors. Beginning at 9 a.m. the Urban League will host the Young at Heart Health Fair, which is specially tailored to address the needs and concerns of older generations.

Later that evening, at 7 p.m., Mr. and Mrs. Senior Urban League will be crowned to the tune of oldies favorites at the Senior Social.

Anniversary week events will culminate Saturday, with a red carpet Corporate Awards Gala at the Millennium Center. Business leaders will be honored in the categories of business development, civic responsibility and employee development. The black-tie affair will also feature dinner and dancing.

Born of a collaboration among 60 black and white citizens in an era when races didn't often mix, the Urban League has remained steadfast in its commitment to serving the entire community, says CEO and President Keith Grandberry, who took the helm nearly three years ago.

"The Urban League is strictly about the community," he remarked. "Everything we do, everything we are is because of the community we serve."

Its original mission of creating job opportunities and battling unemployment is endures to this day, Grandberry added.

"We have provided so many people with job opportunities; I think that's first and foremost," he said.



Keith Grandberry



Patricia Sadler

"There's nothing better than being able to provide for your family."

Despite trying economic times, the organization has thrived under Grandberry's leadership.

"As the economy has slipped, we in fact have worked harder," he commented. "We have so many people in need now - more than ever before. Our work has tripled as a result of recent events."

Despite the growing demands upon the Urban League's service, Grandberry says he's confident the organization will continue to empower those who need it most.

"Being an optimist, one of the things I hope we can get out of this economic crisis is to look at how we can

create (entrepreneurial) business opportunities for some of the people," he commented. "A lot of times, you can

take the negative and turn it into a positive."

For more information

about the Urban League's schedule of events, call (336) 725-5614 or visit www.wsurban.org.

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